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Yuan-zhang Liu: a Short Biography

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Born in China, Liu received his higher education in both Japan and the U.S. in mechanical engineering, economics, and operations management (OM). After building this knowledge foundation, he studied quality control (QC) from Professor Eugene Grant and total quality management (TQM) from Professor Kaoru Ishikawa in the early 1950s.

He has been devoting himself to the promotion of total quality management in China for more than fifty years. His contributions over the past fifty years have been unprecedented, helping China to build the foundations of industrialization and quality.

He founded the first Research Group of TQM of China in 1957 within the Chinese Academy of Sciences. And he opened the first Training Seminar on QC in China in 1957 in cooperation with the Ministry of Machinery Industry and the Ministry of Textile Industry.

From the beginning of reform and opening-up of China, he began to make use of mass media to facilitate his work. He was the first person to write a series of articles to introduce QC on Workers Daily, in 1979, the first person to start TV network program on TQM, in 1979, the first person to host a TV program on service quality, in 1986, and the first person to work as the editor-in-chief of China Quality Management for China Association of Quality.

He was also the first person to be awarded the title of “National Model Worker”, and the first person in the quality profession to be elected deputy to the National People’s Congress. He headed the first Chinese delegation of QM to visit the U.S., in 1982, and was the first and only one to speak to the joint session of the American Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Engineering during the visit on China’s quality management.

He has served many Chinese enterprises as an executive adviser and helped them to solve many problems in quality management. In recognition of his achievements and contributions to the change and establishment of the Chinese thinking concerning quality and the implementation of QM in Chinese enterprises and government entities, he has

been referred to, by many, as “The Father of Quality of China”.

His theory concerning the essence of quality in terms of combination of and balance between the market value and the usage value makes him unique among quality management professionals. His ability to educate the Chinese frontline workers on quality control by using simple terminologies makes him popular in the Chinese enterprises.

He has the acquaintance with many foreign professionals of quality management who have been beneficial to himself and quality management professionals of China as well, including Dr. James Harrington, one of his close friends, among these foreign professionals.

He also has broad-based connections with the Chinese Government. Many of his proposed nation-wide programs, such as “The National Quality Month “, “Quality Circle Activities”, and “Quality Engineer Certification” have been approved and implemented by the Chinese Government.

He was elected member to the International Academy for Quality in 1995 and was elected member to the Chinese Academy for Engineering in 2001. He was awarded the “Ishikawa-Kano” award in 2011 in Singapore, the first “China Quality” Personal Award in 2013, and the “Lancaster Award” from American Society for Quality in 2014.

He has published approximately 20 books and more than 300 articles. His most recent book “Counting My Blessings – A Memoir of My Life in Quality”, in which he recorded his life-long pursuit of promoting TQM in China, was published in May 2011.